

Creationism motion gains more support in Scottish Parliament

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Two MSPs have offered formal support for a motion which calls for Scottish children to be made "aware of" creationist teaching.

Richard Lyle MSP and Dave Thompson MSP are supporting the motion, which was put forward by John Mason MSP. The full motion [reads](#):

"That the Parliament notes that South Lanarkshire Council has issued guidance concerning the appointment and input of chaplains and religious organisations in schools; understands that some people believe that God created the world in six days, some people believe that God created the world over a longer period of time and some people believe that the world came about without anyone creating it; considers that none of these positions can be proved or disproved by science and all are valid beliefs for people to hold, and further considers that children in Scotland's schools should be aware of all of these different belief systems."

The debate comes in response to a scandal at an East Kilbride school in 2013, when the American Church of Christ handed out material to school pupils denouncing homosexuality, abortion and evolution. Two headteachers were removed over the controversy.

Following this, the Scottish Secular Society [petitioned](#) the Scottish Government to institute a ban on the "presentation in Scottish publicly funded schools of separate creation and of Young Earth doctrines as viable alternatives to the established science of evolution, common descent, and deep time."

In response to the controversy, Stewart Maxwell MSP introduced a motion stating that the Holyrood parliament "believes that creationism should not be presented as a scientific theory and viable alternative to the established theory of evolution."

In December 2014 the Scottish Government [rejected](#) the proposed ban on the teaching of creationism. Tim Simons, Head of the Curriculum Unit in the Scottish Government's Learning Directorate, said that "guidance on these matters is unnecessary."

The National Secular Society disputes this, and NSS spokesperson for Scotland Alistair McBay said: "The fact that groups are dedicated to infiltrating creationism, often branded as 'intelligent design', into classrooms means that guidance to ban creationism in science classrooms is needed now."

In their submission about the Scottish Secular Society's petition to ban the teaching of creationism, the Free Church of Scotland [wrote](#): "The position of the Scottish Government and the teaching unions is that we don't need politicians telling teachers what they should teach. This is a position the Free Church of Scotland completely agrees with.

"Politicians seeking to enforce their doctrines through the State education system is the mark of an

authoritarian, not a democratic state."

Alistair McBay added: "Now that another politician, John Mason, is trying to tell teachers what they should teach, namely creationism, I wonder if the Free Church will stick to their view that politicians shouldn't be telling teachers what they should teach.

"If we substitute 'politicians' for 'reverends', we find that the Free Church of Scotland are doing exactly what they claim to oppose: seeking to enforce their doctrines in the state education system.

"There are countless creation myths through time and cultures. Why should a Christian one receive privileged consideration? Hesiod's *Theogony* carries the account of the origins and genealogies of the Greek gods. Should that be considered too?"

Update (02/02/15): John Mason MSP tweeted: "I think science is better sticking to what exists. How and why things came about is probably better not included in science."

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